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### Autism Awareness

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#### April is *Autism Awareness Month*

Every April people around the world raise awareness about autism. Global landmarks, businesses and homeowners are encouraged to light up their properties in blue and some people wear blue clothing to show their support for autism. April may be designated to inform the public about autism, but our families cope with autism *every day*. I believe we can do more to increase support for our families.

***As a grandparent, I suggest that we personally expand outreach in our communities and share information about autism whenever there are opportunities.***

Revealing to others that our families are affected by autism improves understanding and helps to eliminate the stigma some feel is associated with having a relative with autism. In my experience, sometimes just saying "autism" out loud in public draws interest, even from strangers who either have family members with autism or who are interested in learning more about how it impacts families. Speaking publicly about how our families are affected is a simple and effective way to encourage others to increase their understanding and support for autism *year-round*.

### Community Socials

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#### 2017 UC Irvine Winter Social

GAN thanks all of our volunteers who participated in the Social at the University of California-Irvine on February 12, 2017. We registered 170 guests and the day was packed full of activities, fun and resources for families. Guests with autism were hosted by students and they were also introduced to other guests who share similar interests.

Caregivers were especially happy to have respite time, networking opportunities and

access to local autism experts in an informal question and answer session. Many were thankful to observe their children socializing and having possibilities for new friendships following the Social.

## [You Can Have Socials in Your Community, Too!](#)

This is the third year GAN has sponsored ***Socials for Adults with Autism (ages 16 & up) and Their Caregivers***. The transition/adult years are very difficult for individuals with autism, especially after the age of 22 when they are no longer supported by public education. If they have not developed opportunities for community integration before then, they and their caregivers typically become socially isolated. GAN began sponsoring events in a church with college students and faculty support. As our guest list increased, we moved events to 3 local university sites. Every community has different support opportunities and locations to sponsor events. We have developed a [Tool Kit here](#) to make planning easy. Contact GAN if you would like more information or suggestions.



[CLICK HERE FOR MORE PHOTOS](#)

## Celebrating Autism

### Celebrating Autism in the Creative Arts

There is no doubt that autism has been in the spotlight for quite a few years, which can only lead to good things. One of those good things is an increase of actors and performers playing autistic characters. We see TV series such as *The A Word* and *Parenthood*, and documentaries on PBS such as *How to Dance in Ohio* and *Life Animated*. New roles for characters with autism are increasing in theatre and movies as well. Check to see how you can view them on Amazon, Netflix, Hulu or from other online sources.

Here are some additional resources to help you find interesting films and TV shows about autism:

Films & Documentaries about Autism - Autism Speaks

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/resource-library/films-and-documentaries>

Movies Featuring ASD - Autism Research Institute

[https://www.autism.com/news\\_movies](https://www.autism.com/news_movies)

Nine Films About Autism on Netflix

<http://kerrymagro.com/films-about-autism-on-netflix/>

Three Plays Put the Spotlight on Autism

<http://www.autismdailynewscast.com/three-plays-put-the-spotlight-on-autism/3992/laurel-joss/>



### 3 Apps to Get Organized

#### First Then Visual Schedule HD

An issue facing children with autism is that they require a clear, set schedule to help prevent them from acting out as a result of something unexpected. First Visual Schedule HD lets you create a pictogram-based schedule, with a timer for each event, that the child can then check off as each task is completed. \$9.99

#### Autism Tracker Pro

Autism Tracker Pro uses a visual calendar so you can track and chart patterns over time, from mood to behavior to health to food. The app also lets you share calendars via email or Twitter, and, for \$15, you can track an unlimited number of individuals. \$9.99

## Wonkido Visual Organizer

Wonkido Visual Organizer is an interactive visual scheduler that integrates schedules, chore charts, points and prizes all into one system, with visual graphics, instructions and much more to help a child stay on task. Also allows you to privately share your child's schedule with everyone involved in educating and caring for your child. FREE



## Apps for Behavior

### Model Me Going Places

This unique merger of video modeling and music therapy is designed to help teach skills in a way that appeals to the strengths of children with developmental disabilities. FREE

<http://www.modelmekids.com/community-social-skills-autism.html>

### Kid In Story

Kid In Story places the child as the main character in one of several stories, helping him or her to understand appropriate social behaviors. Using the iPad's camera, you can superimpose your child into the tale, and then use your voice to narrate the story. Eight templates cover topics from washing ones hands to a trip to San Francisco, and users can create their own stories, too. \$6.99

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/kid-in-story-book-maker-create-share-personalized-photo/id594403164?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D4>



## E-Bay Donations

### Donate to GAN's [Giving Works eBay Store](#)



Grandparents have lots of "stuff" like collectibles, unused gifts and household goods, clothing, vintage jewelry and things in good condition that our families "do not want."

Your "stuff" can benefit other grandparents and families affected by autism. The Grandparent Autism Network welcomes donated goods.

You can drop off tax deductible items at Jay's Catering, 10581 Garden Grove Blvd., Garden Grove, CA - or send them C/O GAN at 23785 El Toro Road, #103, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (USPS flat rate boxes may lower mailing costs!)

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[www.ganinfo.org](http://www.ganinfo.org)  
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Networking together,  
grandparents are a vital  
resource for autism...  
and each other!

